

Message Text

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ACTION ARA-14

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E.O. 11652: N/A

TAGS: SNAR, BL

SUBJECT: PRESIDENTIAL CANDIDATE PEREDA ON NARCOTICS

1. DURING A DISCUSSION ON THE BOLIVIAN ELECTIONS AS THEY MAY AFFECT THE US-GOB NARCOTICS PROGRAM, DNSP CHIEF COL. APARICIO SUGGESTED THAT HE AND EMBASSY NARCOTICS ADVISER ARROYO MEET WITH GENERAL PEREDA AND INQUIRE AS TO PEREDA'S STAND ON THE ENFORCEMENT PROGRAM FOLLOWING THE ELECTIONS, ASSUMING HE IS ELECTED.

2. APARICIO AND ARROYO MET WITH PEREDA ON APRIL 11, 1978. THEY EXPRESSED CONCERN THAT CHANCES OF ANY SIGNIFICANT PROGRESS IN RESTRICTING NEW COCA PLANTINGS DURING THE PRE-ELECTION PERIOD SEEMED TO BE GREATLY REDUCED DUE TO POLITICAL CONSIDERATIONS WAS POINTED OUT. ARROYO THEN ASKED PEREDA WHAT HIS POLICIES WOULD BE IF ELECTED. PEREDA SAID THAT AS A CANDIDATE HE CONTINUED TO SUPPORT FULLY A STRONG NARCOTICS PROGRAM AS HE HAD WHEN MINISTER OF INTERIOR. IF ELECTED, HE WOULD MAKE CERTAIN THAT EXISTING NARCOTICS LAWS WERE ENFORCED, INCLUDING THE RESTRICTIONS ON THE EXPANSION OF COCA PLANTINGS. HE WOULD LIKE, HOWEVER, TO SEE SOME OF THE SOCIO-ECONOMIC BENEFITS OF THE AID-SUPPORTED PROGRAMS REACHING THE GROWERS

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SIMULTANEOUSLY WITH MORE EFFECTIVE ENFORCEMENT.

3. APARICIO AND ARROYO POINTED OUT TO PEREDA THAT THE ENFORCEMENT SITUATION IN SANTA CRUZ WAS NOT SATISFACTORY, THAT SOME AUTHORITIES WERE APPARENTLY EXTENDING PROTECTION TO TRAFFICKERS. ALSO, THAT A DNSP/US EFFORT WAS UNDERWAY TO IDENTIFY AND PROSECUTE MAJOR TRAFFICKERS IN THAT AREA. PEREDA SAID THAT IF IT BECOMES

UP TO HIM, HE WILL FULLY SUPPORT THIS EFFORT. MOREOVER, IF IMPORTANT FIGURES IN SANTA CRUZ WITH POLITICAL INFLUENCE SHOULD BE IDENTIFIED AS TRAFFICKERS, THEY WOULD BE PROSECUTED NEVERTHELESS. HE WOULD NOT, REPEAT NOT GIVE THEM PROTECTION. FINALLY, PEREDA STATED THAT AS PRESIDENT HE WOULD CONTINUE TO FOLLOW UP WHOLEHEARTEDLY, AS HE HAD AS MINISTER OF INTERIOR, ON THE COMMITMENTS MADE BY THE GOB DURING THE VISIT OF THEN SECRETARY OF STATE KISSINGER IN 1976.

4. COMMENT: AS THE DEPARTMENT IS AWARE, EMBASSY HAS ALWAYS FOUND PEREDA TO BE ONE OF THE GOB'S CHIEF SUPPORTERS OF THE NARCOTICS PROGRAM, AND IT IS GOOD TO HAVE THESE ASSURANCES THOUGH WE DOUBT VERY MUCH THAT PEREDA WILL MAKE ANY PUBLIC STATEMENT AGAINST DRUGS OR DRUG TRAFFIC DURING HIS CAMPAIGN. IT IS LIKELY THAT ALL PRESIDENTIAL CANDIDATES WILL STEER CLEAR OF COCA AND NARCOTICS ISSUES, GIVEN THE IMPORTANCE OF THE SUPPORT OF THE COCA GROWERS. BOEKER

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